

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 remain pending in this application for which applicant seeks reconsideration.

Office Action Status

Since the last Office Action is not final, Box 2(b) should have been checked instead of Box 2(a) in the Office Action Summary.

Amendment

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Claim 1 has been amended to remove a minor informality, namely to remove a stray comma. Claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the processed signals from both of the first and second delay units are applied to each of the speakers. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 1-8 now stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yanagawa (USP 5,233,664) in view of Hatae (USP 5,675,655) and Yoshida (JP 11-027604). Applicant traverses this rejection because the applied references would not have taught at least supplying both the first and second delay processed signals to each of the loudspeakers as set forth in independent claim 3.

Specifically, Referring to Fig. 9 of the present disclosure, independent claim 3 calls for a branching unit (e.g., 800) that branches an input audio signal into two or more signals. A first delay unit (e.g., 300) provides a first delay for one of the branched audio signals and supplies first delay processed signals to **each of** the loudspeakers (e.g., 210-1 to 210-n) in accordance with first provided directivity control information from a directivity control unit (e.g., 400). A second delay unit (e.g., 300') provides a second delay for another of the branched audio signals and supplies second delay processed signals to **each of** the loudspeakers (e.g., 210-1 to 210-n) in accordance with second provided directivity control information from the directivity control unit (e.g., 400). The directivity control unit (e.g., 400) generates the first directivity control information and the second directivity control information so that a directional characteristic of the array speaker unit obtained by the first delay differs from the directional characteristic of the array speaker unit obtained by the second delay, and supplies the generated information respectively to the first delay unit and the second delay unit. An adding unit (e.g., 900) adds the first and second delay processed signals applied to each of the respective loudspeakers.

In rejecting the claims, the examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to adapt Yanagawa's FIR filter per the teachings of Hate's FIR filter, which includes delay elements. Even if the combination were deemed proper for argument's sake, applicant submits that the combination would not have taught providing first and second delay units **both** supplying processed signals to **each** of the loudspeakers.

Rather, in Yanagawa, **only one signal processed by the digital filter is supplied to only one corresponding speaker**. In other words, Yanagawa has no second signal processed by a second delay unit supplying to the same one corresponding speaker.

As Yoshida would not have alleviated Yanagawa's shortcomings even if it were deemed properly combinable with the Yanagawa/Hate combination, applicant submits that the pending claims distinguish over the applied references.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that claims 1-8 patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicant urges the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATE

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